

Amendments to the Specification:

Please insert the following section on page 1, after the Title and before the "Background Of The Invention" section:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This is a continuation patent application of application No. 10/047,174 filed January 14, 2002, now U.S. Patent No. _____.

Please amend page 13, line 20, through page 14, line 4, as follows:

In accordance with an embodiment of the invention, a high density connector comprises plug housing 20 as in FIGS. 1-6 and a receptacle housing as in FIGS. 5-15. The receptacle housing 52 has a base wall 54 and at least one lateral wall 56 defining a cavity 55. The lateral wall 56 is configured to nest within the plug housing 20. A high density array of female electrical contacts 72 is arranged in the cavity 55 57. The contacts 72 are supported in the base wall 54 and extend unsupported above the base wall to a given height. This invention is adapted to protect such unsupported contacts 72 from being bent or misaligned during handling prior to the connection of the receptacle 52 to the plug 20.

In accordance with an embodiment of this invention, such protection is provided by at least one protection member 100, which is arranged in the cavity 55 57 adjacent the interface 58. Preferably the protection member is a single piece member. The protection member 100 has an

array of openings 102 into which the electrical contacts 72 extend. The protection member 100 has a thickness selected so that the electrical contacts 72 do not extend generally beyond an outer most surface 104 of the protection member.

Please amend page 14, lines 14-22, as follows:

At least one portion 110 of the protection member 100 is adapted to secure the protection member 100 within the cavity 55 ~~57~~. The at least one portion 110 of the protection member 100 preferably comprises a tab 110 adapted to snap fit into a slot 111 in the lateral wall 56 of the receptacle 52 such as into a recess in the wall (not shown). Alternatively the lateral wall 56 could include a latch projection (not shown) within the cavity 55 for engaging the tab portion 110 of the protection member 100 to secure the protection member 100 to the receptacle 52. Preferably a plurality of portions 110 are arranged about the periphery of the protection member and at least along both long sides thereof.

Please amend page 16, lines 5-8 as follows:

Each of the openings 102 ~~100~~ are defined by the void formed between the four projections 126 surrounding the opening. The openings 102 ~~100~~ also form an "S" shape so that the contacts 72 are free to deflect as a male terminal 28 from the plug connector 20 are inserted into engagement with the contacts 72.